

JewishEncyclopedia.com

The unedited full-text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia

- Phrase search: "names of god"
 - Exclude terms: "names of god" -zerah
 - Volume/Page: v9 p419
 - Diacritics optional: Ḥanukkah or hanukkah
 - Search by Author: altruism author:Hirsch

search tips & recommendations

- [A](#)
 - [AACH - ABDI](#)
 - [ABDI - ABRA](#)
 - [ABRA - ABRA](#)
 - [ABRA - ADLE](#)
 - [ADLE - AINM](#)
 - [AIRE - ALGA](#)
 - [ALGE - AMOR](#)
 - [AMOS - ANTU](#)
 - [ANTW - ARTA](#)
 - [ARTA - ASSE](#)
 - [ASSE - AZZU](#)
- [B](#)
 - [BAAL - BAKH](#)
 - [BAKI - BARN](#)
 - [BARN - BEAB](#)
 - [BERA - BELM](#)
 - [BELM - BENJ](#)
 - [BENJ - BERN](#)
 - [BERN - BIED](#)
 - [BIEG - BLUM](#)
 - [BLUM - BORN](#)
 - [BORO - BROD](#)
 - [BROD - BYZA](#)
- [C](#)
 - [CABA - CANS](#)
 - [CANS - CARP](#)
 - [CARP - CEME](#)
 - [CENS - CHAS](#)
 - [CHAT - CHRI](#)
 - [CHRI - COHE](#)
 - [COHE - COLO](#)
 - [COLO - CORD](#)
 - [CORD - CREM](#)
 - [CREM - CZYN](#)
- [D](#)
 - [DABB - DANO](#)

- [DANO - DAVI](#)
- [DAVI - DAVI](#)
- [DAVI - DEDE](#)
- [DEDI - DENM](#)
- [DENV - DEUT](#)
- [DEUT - DIES](#)
- [DIET - DLUG](#)
- [DLUG - DOSA](#)
- [DOSA - DUAL](#)
- [DUAR - DYVI](#)

- [E](#)

- [EAGL - EFES](#)
- [EFOD - EJEC](#)
- [EKAH - ELEA](#)
- [ELEA - ELIE](#)
- [ELIE - ELIJ](#)
- [ELIJ - ELTE](#)
- [ELVI - ENGE](#)
- [ENGE - EPIC](#)
- [EPIG - ESTE](#)
- [ESTE - EVIL](#)
- [EVIL - EZRA](#)

- [F](#)

- [FABL - FARH](#)
- [FARH - FELB](#)
- [FELD - FEUE](#)
- [FEUS - FISC](#)
- [FISC - FLEX](#)
- [FLIS - FORG](#)
- [FORG - FRAN](#)
- [FRAN - FRAN](#)
- [FRAN - FRID](#)
- [FRIE - FROH](#)
- [FROH - FURT](#)

- [G](#)

- [GABB - GAMA](#)
- [GAMA - GEDA](#)
- [GEDA - GERM](#)
- [GERM - GHIR](#)
- [GHIR - GLOG](#)
- [GLOG - GOLD](#)
- [GOLD - GORD](#)
- [GORD - GRAZ](#)
- [GRAZ - GUAR](#)
- [GUAR - GYMN](#)

- [H](#)

- [HAAR - HAIN](#)
- [HAIR - HAMN](#)
- [HAMN - HARA](#)
- [HARA - HAUS](#)
- [HAUS - HAZZ](#)
- [HAZZ - HEKS](#)
- [HELA - HERR](#)
- [HERS - HILL](#)

- [HILL - HOCH](#)
- [HOCH - HORO](#)
- [HORS - HYSS](#)
- [I](#)
 - [I - IBNM](#)
 - [IBNM - IBNY](#)
 - [IBNY - ILLE](#)
 - [ILLI - INDI](#)
 - [INDI - INTE](#)
 - [INTE - ISAA](#)
 - [ISAA - ISAA](#)
 - [ISAA - ISAB](#)
 - [ISAI - ISPA](#)
 - [ISRA - ISRA](#)
 - [ISRA - ISRA](#)
 - [ISRA - IZRA](#)
- [J](#)
 - [JAAR - JACO](#)
 - [JACO - JAFF](#)
 - [JAGE - JEHO](#)
 - [JEHO - JEWI](#)
 - [JEWI - JOD](#)
 - [JOEL - JONA](#)
 - [JONA - JOSE](#)
 - [JOSE - JOSE](#)
 - [JOSE - JUDA](#)
 - [JUDA - JUDE](#)
 - [JUDE - JUWE](#)
- [K](#)
 - [KAB - KALI](#)
 - [KALI - KANA](#)
 - [KANI - KASA](#)
 - [KASH - KEMP](#)
 - [KEMP - KIEV](#)
 - [KIHA - KITE](#)
 - [KITT - KNOT](#)
 - [KNOX - KOKE](#)
 - [KOLB - KOSM](#)
 - [KOSS - KROC](#)
 - [KRON - KUTT](#)
- [L](#)
 - [LAPE - LAND](#)
 - [LAND - LAZA](#)
 - [LAZA - LEMO](#)
 - [LEMU - LEVI](#)
 - [LEVI - LEVI](#)
 - [LEVI - LEWI](#)
 - [LEWI - LILI](#)
 - [LILI - LIVE](#)
 - [LIVE - LOND](#)
 - [LONG - LOWY](#)
 - [LOWY - LYSI](#)
- [M](#)
 - [MAAC - MALA](#)

- [MALA - MARK](#)
 - [MARK - MEAS](#)
 - [MEAT - MENA](#)
 - [MENA - METE](#)
 - [METH - MILL](#)
 - [MILM - MOND](#)
 - [MONE - MOSE](#)
 - [MOSE - MOSE](#)
 - [MOSE - MYST](#)
- [N](#)
 - [NAAM - NAHU](#)
 - [NAHU - NASI](#)
 - [NASI - NATH](#)
 - [NATH - NEBU](#)
 - [NECH - NESE](#)
 - [NESV - NEUZ](#)
 - [NEVA - NICH](#)
 - [NICH - NISS](#)
 - [NISS - NOSE](#)
 - [NOSS - NYON](#)
- [O](#)
 - [OAKA - OHOL](#)
 - [OHOL - OPFE](#)
 - [OPHE - OREG](#)
 - [OREN - OSTR](#)
 - [OSTR - OZER](#)
- [P](#)
 - [PABL - PAPP](#)
 - [PAPP - PATT](#)
 - [PAUL - PENI](#)
 - [PENN - PESI](#)
 - [PESS - PHIN](#)
 - [PHIN - PINS](#)
 - [PINS - POLA](#)
 - [POLA - PORG](#)
 - [PORG - PREG](#)
 - [PREM - PROV](#)
 - [PROV - PYKE](#)
- [Q](#)
 - [QUAD - QUOR](#)
- [R](#)
 - [RAAB - RABI](#)
 - [RABI - RAME](#)
 - [RAMI - RAUS](#)
 - [RAVE - REGG](#)
 - [REGG - REPT](#)
 - [RESC - RIBA](#)
 - [RIBA - RITT](#)
 - [RITT - ROMI](#)
 - [ROMI - ROSE](#)
 - [ROSE - ROTH](#)
 - [ROTH - RYSS](#)
- [S](#)
 - [SAAD - SAMB](#)

- [SAMB - SAND](#)
- [SAND - SCHM](#)
- [SCHM - SELA](#)
- [SELA - SHAT](#)
- [SHAV - SHUS](#)
- [SHUS - SIMH](#)
- [SIMH - SOLO](#)
- [SOLO - SPIE](#)
- [SPIE - STRA](#)
- [STRA - SZOL](#)
- [T](#)
 - [TAAM - TALM](#)
 - [TALM - TARR](#)
 - [TARR - TEHI](#)
 - [TEHI - TENN](#)
 - [TENT - THEB](#)
 - [THEB - TIBE](#)
 - [TIBE - TOBI](#)
 - [TOBI - TORT](#)
 - [TORT - TREB](#)
 - [TREB - TRIW](#)
 - [TROC - TYRO](#)
- [U](#)
 - [UBAL - UNGA](#)
 - [UNGE - URI](#)
 - [URIB - UZZI](#)
- [V](#)
 - [VAEZ - VANS](#)
 - [VANC - VELL](#)
 - [VEND - VERS](#)
 - [VERV - VINE](#)
 - [VINE - VIZH](#)
 - [VOCA - VULT](#)
- [W](#)
 - [WAAD - WALL](#)
 - [WALL - WATE](#)
 - [WATE - WEIG](#)
 - [WEIL - WEIS](#)
 - [WEIS - WESS](#)
 - [WEST - WIEN](#)
 - [WIEN - WILL](#)
 - [WILL - WISE](#)
 - [WISM - WOLF](#)
 - [WOLF - WOOL](#)
 - [WOOL - WYSB](#)
- [X](#)
 - [XABI - XYST](#)
- [Y](#)
 - [YAAB - YARH](#)
 - [YARM - YEVR](#)
 - [YEZE - YIZH](#)
 - [YIZH - YOMK](#)
 - [YOMT - YUSU](#)
- [Z](#)

- [ZABA - ZALI](#)
- [ZALM - ZARF](#)
- [ZARF - ZEBI](#)
- [ZEBI - ZEDE](#)
- [ZEDE - ZEIT](#)
- [ZEIT - ZEPH](#)
- [ZERA - ZIMM](#)
- [ZIMR - ZODI](#)
- [ZOHA - ZUKE](#)
- [ZUKU - ZWEI](#)

DEMONOLOGY.

By: [Emil G. Hirsch](#), [Richard Gottheil](#),
[Kaufmann Kohler](#), [Isaac Broydé](#)

Tweet

Like 148

Share

Instapaper

Table of Contents

- [—Biblical and Post-Biblical Data:](#)
- [Demons in the Bible.](#)
- [Other Demons.](#)
- [Time and Place of Appearance.](#)
- [—In Rabbinical Literature:](#)
- [Nature of Demons.](#)
- [King and Queen of Demons.](#)
- [Pre-Talmudic Demonology.](#)
- [Cosmic Demons.](#)
- [New Testament Demonology.](#)
- [The Law, the Prophylactic Against Demons.](#)
- [The Philosophers.](#)
- [The Cabalists.](#)
- [Prayers Against Demons.](#)
- [—In Arabic Literature: This article treats only of parallels to Jewish demonology found in Arabic literature.](#)
- [Demons in Islam.](#)

—Biblical and Post-Biblical Data:

Systematic knowledge concerning demons or evil spirits. Demons (Greek, δαίμονες or δαιμόνια; Hebrew, שְׁרִיִּם [Deut. xxxii. 17; Ps. cvi. 37] and שְׁעִירִים [Lev. xvii. 7; II Chron. xi. 15; A. V. "devils"; Luther, "Feldgeist" and "Feldteufel"]; Aramaic, or rabbinical, בִּישְׁתִּימִין and מוֹיָקִין as spirits animating all elements of life and inhabiting all parts of the world, have their place in the primitive belief of all tribes and races. When certain deities rose to be the objects of regular worship and became the rulers of the powers of life, demons, or spirits, were subordinated to them. But inasmuch as they were still feared and occasionally worshiped by the populace, they became the objects of popular superstition. Jewish demonology can at no time be viewed as the outcome of an antecedent Hebrew belief. While the nomadic Hebrews had much in common with the Arabian Bedouins in their belief in spirits (see Wellhausen, "Reste Arabischen Heidenthums: Skizzen und Vorarbeiten," 1887, iii. 135 *et seq.*; Smith, "Rel. of Sem." 1889, pp. 112-125, 422 *et seq.*), Canaanite practise and belief were greatly influenced by ancient Chaldea, whose demonology is in the main pre-Semitic (see Lenormant, "Chaldean Magic," 1877, pp. 23-38; German transl., 1878, pp. 22-41; Jastrow, "Religion of Babylonia and Assyria," pp. 260 *et seq.*; Zimmern, in Schrader's "K. A. T." 1902, ii. 458-464). In Babylonia the Jews came under the influence of both the Chaldean and the Persian belief in good and in evil spirits, and this dualistic system

became a dominant factor of Jewish demonology and [Angelology](#). In Europe, Teutonic, Celtic, and Slavonic demonology in the form of superstition permeated Jewish practise and belief. [See Superstition](#).

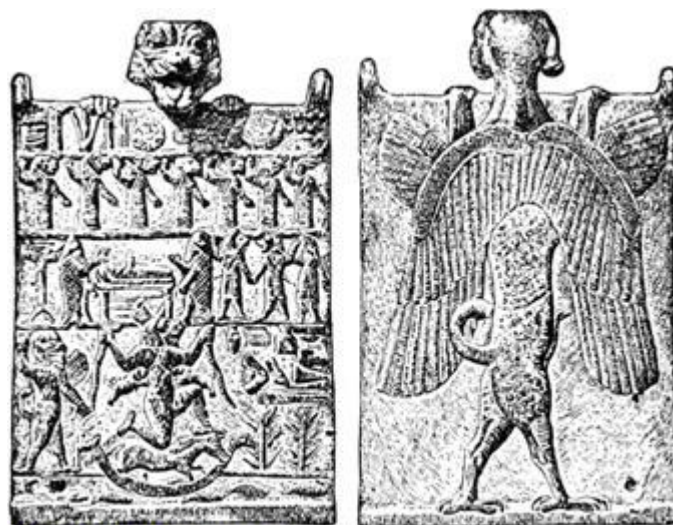
Demons in the Bible.

The demons mentioned in the Bible are of two classes, the "se'irim" and the "shedim." The se'irim ("hairy beings"), to which the Israelites sacrificed in the open fields (Lev. xvii. 7; A. V. "devils"; R. V., incorrectly, "he-goats"), are satyr-like demons, described as dancing in the wilderness (Isa. xiii. 21, xxxiv. 14; compare Maimonides, "Moreh," iii. 46; Vergil's "Eclogues," v. 73, "saltantes satyri"), and are identical with the jinn of the Arabian woods and deserts (see Wellhausen, *l.c.*, and Smith, *l.c.*). To the same class belongs [Azazel](#), the goat-like demon of the wilderness (Lev. xvi. 10 *et seq.*), probably the chief of the se'irim, and [Lilith](#) (Isa. xxxiv. 14). Possibly "the roes and hinds of the field," by which Shulamit conjures the daughters of Jerusalem to bring her back to her lover (Cant. ii. 7, iii. 5), are faunlike spirits similar to the se'irim, though of a harmless nature. The [אבני השדה](#) (Job v. 23. A. V. "stones of the field"), with which the righteous are said to be in league—obviously identical with, if not a corruption of, the [אבני השדה](#) (Mishnah Kil. viii. 5), explained in Yer. Kil. 31c as [דבור בר נש](#) "a fabulous mountain-man drawing nourishment from the ground" (see Jastrow, "Dict.," and Levy, "Neuhebr. Wörterb." s.v. [אבני](#))—seem to be field-demons of the same nature. The wilderness as the home of demons was regarded as the place whence such diseases as leprosy issued, and in cases of leprosy one of the birds set apart to be offered as an expiatory sacrifice was released that it might carry the disease back to the desert (Lev. xiv. 7, 52; compare a similar rite in Sayce, "Hibbert Lectures," 1887, p. 461, and "Zeit. für Assyriol." 1902, p. 149).

The Israelites also offered sacrifices to the shedim (Deut. xxxii. 17; Ps. cvi. 37). The name [שד](#) (believed by Hoffmann, "Hiob," 1891, to occur in Job v. 21), for a long time erroneously connected with "the Almighty" ([שדי](#)), denotes a storm-demon (from [שדד](#), Isa. xiii. 6; A. V. "destruction"; compare Psxc. 6, [שדד](#), "that stormeth about"; A. V. "that wasteth"). In Chaldean mythology the seven evil deities were known as "shedim," storm-demons, represented in ox-like form; and because these oxcolossi representing evil demons were, by a peculiar law of contrast, used also as protective genii of royal palaces and the like, the name "shed" assumed also the meaning of a propitious genius in Babylonian magic literature (see Delitzsch, "Assyrisches Handwörterb." pp. 60, 253, 261, 646; Jensen, "Assyr.-Babyl. Mythen und Epen," 1900, p. 453; Sayce, *l.c.* pp. 441, 450, 463; Lenormant, *l.c.* pp. 48-51). It was from Chaldea that the name "shedim" = evil demons came to the Israelites, and so the sacred writers intentionally applied the word in a dyslogistic sense to the Canaanite deities 'in the two passages quoted. But they also spoke of "the destroyer" ([המשהית](#)) Ex. xii. 23) as a demon whose malignant effect upon the houses of the Israelites was to be warded off by the blood of the paschal sacrifice sprinkled upon the lintel and the door-post (a corresponding pagan talisman is mentioned in Isa. lvii. 8). In II Sam. xxiv. 16 and II Chron. xxi. 15 the pestilence-dealing demon is called [מלאך המשהית](#) = "the destroying angel" (compare "the angel of the Lord" in II Kings xix. 35; Isa. xxxvii. 36), because, although they are demons, these "evil messengers" (Ps. lxxviii. 49; A. V. "evil angels") do only the bidding of God, their Master; they are the agents of His divine wrath.

The Nether World in the Clutches of a Demon. (From an Assyrian bronze tablet in the collection of M. de Clerq.)

But there are many indications that popular Hebrew mythology ascribed to the demons a certain independence, a malevolent character of their own, because they are believed to come forth, not from the heavenly abode of Yhwh, but from the nether world (compare Isa. xxxviii. 11 with Job xiv. 13; Ps. xvi. 10, xlix. 16, cxxxix. 8). "The first-born of Death who devours the members of his [man's] body" and causes him to be brought "to the king of terrors" (Job xviii. 13, 14, Hebr.), is undoubtedly one of the terrible hawk-like demons, portrayed in the Babylonian Hades-picture (see illustration above, and Roscher, "Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie," s.v. "Nergal"),



©JewishEncyclopedia.com

and the "messengers of death" (Prov. xvi. 14) are identical with the "servants of Nergal," the King of Hades and god of pestilence and fever in Chaldean mythology (see Jeremias, "Die Babylonisch-Assyrischen Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode," 1887, pp. 71 *et seq.*; Zimmern, *l.c.* pp. 412 *et seq.*; Jensen, *l.c.* pp. 478, 557).

Other Demons.

'Alukah (Prov. xxx. 15; A. V. "horseleech"), the bloodsucker or vampire, whose two daughters cry "Give! Give!" is none other than the flesh-devouring ghoul of the Arabs, called by them "'aluk" (Wellhausen, *l.c.* pp. 135-137). She has been rendered in Jewish mythology the demon of the nether world (= נִיְהִיָּה see 'Ab. Zarah 17a), and the names of her two daughters have in all probability, as familiar names of dreaded diseases, been dropped (compare Ewald, Delitzsch, and Wilderboer's commentaries, *ad loc.*, and the description of the demon "Labartu" in "Zeit. für Assyriol." 1902, pp. 148 *et seq.*). Deber ("pestilence"), originally the death-dealing sting of the midsummer sun-god Nergal (see Roscher, *l.c.* iii. 257), and Keṭēb ("smiter"), the deadly hot wind (Deut. xxxii. 24; Isa. xxviii. 2; A. V. "destruction," "destroying"), are demons, the one walking in darkness, the other storming along in midday (A. V. "that wasteth at noonday"), against which God's protection is invoked in the incantatory psalm "Shir shel Pega'im," ascribed to Moses by the Rabbis (Ps. xci. 5, 6; compare Midr. Teh. *ad loc.*; Tan., Naso, ed. Buber, 39; Num. R. xii.). Possibly the evil spirit that troubled Saul (I Sam. xvi. 14 *et seq.*) was originally a demon (compare Josephus, "Ant." vi. 8, § 2), turned into an evil spirit coming from Yhwh in the amended Masoretic text (see Smith, Commentary, *ad loc.*). None of these demons, however, has actually a place in the system of Biblical theology; it is the Lord who sends pestilence and death (Ex. ix. 3, xii. 29); Deber and Reshef ("the fiery bolt") are His heralds (Hab. iii. 5). The shedim are "not-gods" (Deut. xxxii. 17); there is no supernatural power beyond Yhwh (Deut. iv. 35; compare Sanh. 67b). It is possible, however, that, as at a later stage in the development of Judaism the idols were regarded as demons, so the Canaanite deities were, either in disparagement, or as powers seducing men to idolatry, called "shedim" by the sacred writers (Deut. xxxii. 17; Ps. cv. 37); all the more so as the latter ascribed a certain reality to the idols (Ex. xii. 12; Isa. xix. 1, xxiv. 21; see Baudissin, "Studien zur Semitischen Religionsgesch." 1876, i. 130).

Time and Place of Appearance. —In Rabbinical Literature:

It was the primitive demonology of Babylonia which peopled the world of the Jews with beings of a semi-celestial and semi-infernal nature. Only afterward did the division of the world between Ahriman and Ormuzd in the Mazdean system give rise to the Jewish division of life between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of evil. Rabbinical demonology has, like the Chaldean, three classes of demons, though they are scarcely separable one from another. There were the "shedim," the "mazziḳim" (harmers), and the "ruḥin" or "ruḥotra'ot" (evil spirits). Besides these there were "lilin" (night spirits), "ṭelane" (shade, or evening, spirits), "ṭiharire" (midday spirits), and "zaḥfire" (morning spirits), as well as the "demons that bring famine" and "such as cause storm and earthquake" (Targ. Yer. to Deut. xxxii. 24 and Num. vi. 24; Targ. to Cant. iii. 8, iv. 6; Eccl. ii. 5; Ps. xci. 5, 6; compare Ps. lxx. and Is. xxxiv. 14). Occasionally they are called "mal'ake ḥabbalah" (angels of destruction) (Ber. 51a; Ket. 104a; Sanh. 106b). "They surround man on all sides as the earth does the roots of the vine"; "a thousand are on his left, and ten thousand on his right side" (compare Ps. xci. 7); if a man could see them he would lack the strength to face them, though he can see them by casting the ashes of the fetus of a black cat about his eyes, or by sprinkling ashes around his bed he can trace their cock-like footprints in the morning (Ber. 6a). They hover around the house and the field (Gen. R. xx.), particularly in the lower regions of the air (Num. R. xii.; Tan., Mishpaṭim, ed. Vienna, 99a; compare Diogenes Laertius, viii. 32, ix. 7). Their main abode is in the northern part of the earth (Pirḳe R. El. iii., after Jer. i. 14). Their sporting-places are caper-bushes and spearworts, where they dwell in groups of sixty; nut-trees, where they form in groups of nine; shady spots on moonlight nights, especially the roofs of houses, under gutters, or near ruins; cemeteries and privies (there is a special demon of the privy, "shed shel bet ha-kisse"); water, oil, and bread-crumbs cast on the ground; and they harm persons and things coming near them (Pes. 3b; Ber. 3a, 62b; Shab. 67a; Giṭ. 70a; Hul. 105; Sanh. 65b).

R. Johanan knew of 300 kinds of shedim living near the town of Shiḥin (Giṭ. 68a). It is dangerous to walk between two palm-trees (Pes. 111a). Demons are particularly hurtful at night. It is unsafe to salute a person in the dark, for he might be a demon (Meg. 3a); to sleep alone in a house, as Lilith may seize one (Shab. 151b); to walk alone in the night or in the morning before cockcrow (Ber. 43a; Yoma 21a; [compare Cock](#)); to take water from one whose hands have not been washed in the morning (Ber. 51a). Especially dangerous are the eves of

Wednesday and of the Sabbath, for then Agrat bat Maḥlat, "the dancing roof-demon" (Yalkut Haḏash, Keshafim, 56), haunts the air with her train of eighteen myriads of messengers of destruction, "every one of whom has the power of doing harm" (Pes. 112b). On those nights one should not drink water except out of white vessels and after having recited Ps. xxix. 3-9 (the verses mentioning seven times "the voice of the Lord") or other magic formulas (Pes. 3a). Another perilous season is midsummer noon from the 17th of Tammuz to the 9th of Ab. Then the demon Keṭeb Meriri reigns from ten in the forenoon to three in the afternoon. He has the head of a calf, with one revolving horn in the middle, and an eye on the breast, and his whole body is covered with scales and hair and eyes; and whosoever sees him, man or beast, falls down and expires (Pes. 3b; Lam. R. i. 3; Midr. Teh. to Ps. xci. 3; Num. R. xii.). Demons assume the shape of men, but have no shadow (Yeb. 122a; Giṭ. 66a; Yoma 75a). At times they are black goat-like beings (שְׂעִירִים; Kīd. 72a); at other times, seven-headed dragons (Kīd. 29a). "Like angels, they have wings and fly from one end of the world to the other, and know the future; and like men they eat, propagate, and die" (Hag. 16b; Ab. R. N. xxxvii.). They cause the faintness of students and the wear and tear of their dress in the schoolhouses and assemblies of the learned (Ber. 6a). But they are not always malign spirits. As they, by virtue of their semi-celestial nature, can overhear the decrees of heaven, they may be consulted by men as to the future; this can be done by means of oil and eggshells; only on Sabbath is this forbidden (Shab. 101a). Hillel and Johanan ben Zakkai understood their talk just as King Solomon did (Mas. Soferim, xvi. 9; B. B. 134a; Suk. 28a; Giṭ. 68b; Ker. 5b; Pesik., ed. Buber, 45b).

The saint Abba Jose of Zaintor saved his town from harm, when informed by a water-demon living near by that a harmful fellow demon made his dwelling there, by causing the inhabitants to go down to the water's edge at dawn, equipped with iron rods and spits, and beat the intruder to death; blood marked the spot where he was killed (Lev. R. xxiv.). The magicians in Egypt made use of demons to perform their miracles, as all witchcraft is the work of demons (Sanh. 67b; 'Er. 18b; Ex. R. ix.), though demons can not create, but only transform existing things (Sanh. 67b). Egypt was considered the stronghold of such witchcraft as worked by means of demons (Kīd. 49b; Shab. 104b; Men. 85a; Tan., Wayera, ed. Buber, 17, 27; Tosef., Shab. xi. 15; compare Friedländer, "Sittenges. Roms," i. 362, iii. 517). Some of the Babylonian amoraim employed shedim as friendly spirits, and received useful instruction from them, calling them by familiar names, such as "Joseph" or "Jonathan" (Pes. 110a; Hūl. 105b; Yeb. 122a; 'Er. 43a; regarding שְׂדֵי יִנְתָן see Schorr in "He-Ḥaluz," 1865, p. 18). Demons were regarded by antiquity as beings endowed with higher intelligence (see Friedländer, *l.c.* iii. 562). They were said to have been created at the twilight of the Sabbath (Abot v. 9); "after the souls were created the Sabbath set in, and so they remained without bodies" (Gen. R. vii.).

Nature of Demons.

In the main demons were workers of harm. To them were ascribed the various diseases, particularly such as affect the brain and the inner parts (compare Rhode, "Psyche," 1894, p. 385). Hence there was a constant fear of "Shabriri" (lit. "dazzling glare"), the demon of blindness, who rests on uncovered water at night and strikes those with blindness who drink of it (Pes. 112a; 'Ab. Zarah 12b); "ruaḥ zeraḏah," the spirit of catalepsy, and "ruaḥ zelaḥta," also "ruaḥ palga," the spirit of headache (megrim or meningitis?), hovering on palmtrees (Pes. 111b; Hūl. 105b; Giṭ. 68b); "ben nefilim," the demon of epilepsy, and "ruaḥ zeharīt," the spirit of nightmare (Bek. 44b; Tosef., Bek. v.3; Schorr, in "He-Ḥaluz," 1869, p. 15); "ruaḥ tezazit," the spirit of delirious fever and madness, befalling man and beast (Pesik., Parah, 40a; Yer. Yoma viii. 45b; Yoma 83b; Gen. R. xii.; see Aruch and Dictionaries, s.v. טֶזֶזִית); "ruaḥ zara'at," the spirit of leprosy (Ket. 61b); "ruaḥ kardeyakos," the spirit of melancholy (καρδιακός; Giṭ. vii. 1, p. 67b; Yer. Giṭ. 48c); "shibbeta," a female demon, bringing croup to persons, especially children, who leave their hands unwashed in the morning (Hūl. 107b; Ta'an. 20b; Yoma 77b), probably identical with the "bush-asp," the Parsee demon "with long hands," who lulls men to sleep and attacks them ("Vendidad," xviii. 38; "Bundahish," xxviii. 26); "bat ḥorin" (daughter of freedom; possibly a play on "ḥiwar," a euphemistic expression for blindness), a demon bringing a disease of the eye to one who fails to wash his hands after meals (see Brüll's "Jahrb." i. 157); "kuda," a demon of disease which attacks women in childbirth ('Ab. Zarah 29a); "eshshata," the demon of fever, (*ib.* 28a; Shab. 66b); "ruaḥ zenunim," the spirit of sexual desire (Pes. 111a); "she'iyah," an ox-like demon dwelling in desolate houses (B. K. 21a, after Isa. xxiv. 12); and many others mentioned in Rabbinical lore, only part of which has been preserved in Shab. 66 *et seq.*, 109 *et seq.*: Pes. 109-113; Giṭ. 68-70; Sanh. 67 *et seq.*; see Brüll, *l.c.* i. 154 *et seq.*, who refers also to "puta" or "pura," the spirit of

forgetfulness, mentioned in Siddur Rab Amram, i. 31b; see also Blau, "Das Altjüdische Zauberwesen," 1898, pp. 71-85. On the demon "ben temalyon" (probably a euphemism for St. Vitus' dance) [see Ben Temalion](#); [Exorcism](#).

These demons were supposed to enter the body and cause the disease while overwhelming ("kefa'o shed," R. H. 28a; Sifre, Debarim, 318) or "seizing" the victim ("aḥazo," Shab. 151b; Yoma 83a, 84a); hence the usual name for "epileptic" is "nikpeh" (Bek. 44b; Yeb. 64b; Ket. 60b; Pes. 112b). The Greek word is δαιμονίζεσθαι, meaning the condition of being in the power of a demon. To cure such diseases it was necessary to draw out the evil demons by certain incantations and tailsmanic performances, in which the Essenes excelled. Josephus, who speaks of demons as "spirits of the wicked which enter into men that are alive and kill them," but which can be driven out by a certain root ("B. J." vii. 6, § 3), witnessed such a performance in the presence of the emperor Vespasian ("Ant." viii. 2, § 5), and ascribed its origin to King Solomon.

In the Book of Wisdom, Solomon claims to have received from God power over the demons (Wisdom vii.20). The same power of curing by exorcism such diseases as dumbness, blindness, epilepsy, mania, and fever was exercised by Jesus and his disciples (Matt. viii. 16, ix. 32, xi. 18, xii. 22; Mark i. 25; v. 2 *et seq.*; vii. 32 *et seq.*; ix. 17, 27; Luke iv. 33, 39 *et seq.*; viii. 27; ix. 39; xi. 14; xiii. 11; Acts xvi. 16), as also by their Jewish contemporaries (Acts xix. 13 *et seq.*). It remained for a long time a practise among the early Christians (see Irenæus, "Hæreses," ii. 4, 32; Origen, "Contra Celsum," iii. 24; Friedländer, *l.c.* iii. 572, 634).

King and Queen of Demons.

The demons were believed to be under the dominion of a king or chief, either Ashmodai (Targ. to Eccl. i. 13; Pes. 110a; Yer. Shek. 49b; Lev. R. v., where **שדא** is a corruption of **אשמודאי**) or, in the older Haggadah, Samael ("the angel of death"), who kills people by his deadly poison ("sain ha-mawet"), and is called "head of the devils" ("rosh saṭanim"; Deut. R. xi.; Pirke R. El. xiii.). Occasionally a demon is called "saṭan": "Stand not in the way of an ox when coming from the pasture, for Satan dances between his horns" (Pes. 112b; compare B. Ḳ. 21a). The name "mashḥit" ("destroyer," Ex. xii. 23) seems to refer to the head of the demons in the sentence: "When permission is given to the destroyer to do harm, he no longer discriminates between the righteous and the wicked" (Mek., Bo, 11; B. Ḳ. 60a).

The queen of demons is [Lilith](#), pictured with wings and long flowing hair, and called the "mother of Ahriman" (**הורמין** B. B. 73b; 'Er. 100b; Nid. 24b). "When Adam, doing penance for his sin, separated from Eve for 130 years, he, by impure desire, caused the earth to be filled with demons, or shedim, lilin, and evil spirits" (Gen. R. xx.; 'Er. 18b), and according to Pseudo-Sirach ("Alphabetum Siracidis," ed. Steinschneider, p. 23) it was Lilith, as Adam's concubine, who bore them (compare "Chronicles of Jerahmeel," ed. Gaster. xxiii. 1). Whether identical with Lilith or not, a more familiar personage, as queen of the demons, is Igarat bat Maḥlat (Num. R. xii.; Pes. 112b), with her chariot and her train of eighteen myriads of demons. According to Yalkuṭ, Ḥadash, Keshafim, 56, she dances at the head of 478 (**מחלה**), and Lilith howls at the head of 480 (= **לילית**), companies of demons. The cabalists have as a third queen of the demons and wife of Samael, "Na'amah," the sister of Tubal Cain and the "mother of Ashmodai" (Gen. iv. 27; see Beḥai's commentary, and Yalkuṭ, Reubeni, *ad loc.*). Agrat bat Maḥlat seems to be "the mistress of the sorceresses" who communicated magic secrets to Amemar (compare Pes. 110a, 112b). Yoḥane bat Reṭibi, who, according to Soṭah 22a. prevented women by witchcraft from giving birth to their children, seems to be the same mythical person mentioned by Pliny as "Iotape" or "Lotape" in "Historia Naturalis" (xxx. 1, 2), together with Jannes (Jambres) and Moses (see Reinach, "Texte d'Auteurs Grecs et Romains," 1895, p. 282).

Pre-Talmudic Demonology.

Upon pre-Talmudic demonology new light has been thrown by the "Testament of Solomon," translated by Conybeare in "Jew. Quart. Rev." (1898, xi. 1-45), a work which, notwithstanding many Christian interpolations, is of ancient Jewish origin and related to the "Book of Healing" ("Sefer Refu'ot") ascribed to King Solomon (see Pes. iv. 9; Josephus, *l.c.*; Schürer, "Gesch." iii. 300). In this "Testament" it is told that by the help of a magic ring with the seal of Pentalpha, Lilith-like vampires, Beelzebub, and all kinds of demons and unclean spirits were brought before Solomon, to whom they disclosed their secrets and told how they could be mastered ([see Solomon, Testament of](#)). It contains incantations against certain diseases, and specifies the task allotted to each

of the chief demons in the erection of the Temple. The latter was a favorite theme of the Haggadists (Pesik. R. vi.; Soṭah 48b; Giṭ. 68a). The later Haggadah ascribed to Moses this power to make the demons work at the erection of the Sanctuary (Pesik. R. iv. 6b; Num. R. xii.); and Solomon's "sword against the fear of the spirits at night" (Cant. R. to iii. 8) was transformed into the Magic "sword of Moses" (Pesik. 140a; Pesik. R. 15; Cant. R. iii. 7; Num. R. xi., xii.). Henceforth the magic books of Moses and the "Sword of Moses" (see Dieterich, "Abraxas," 1891, pp. 155, 169 *et seq.*; Gaster, "Sword of Moses," London, 1896) took the place of "Solomon's Testament" in the magic lore of the Jews.

Cosmic Demons.

In the main, demonology among the Jews preserved its simple character as a popular belief, the demons being regarded as mischievous, but not as diabolical or as agencies of a power antagonistic to God. Even Ashmodai, or Asmodeus, the king of demons (Tobit iii. 8, vi. 14, Aramaic version), who kills the seven successive bridegrooms of Sara before their marital union, is but a personification of lust and murder; but there is nothing Satanic—that is, of the spirit of rebellion against God—in him; he is driven out by the recipe prescribed by the angel Raphael, and sent to Egypt and bound by Raphael (Tobit viii. 3). It was only at a certain period and within a certain circle that demonology received its specific character as part of the cosmic power of evil, and in opposition to angelology as part of the cosmic power of good.

Babylonian cosmogony describes the combat of Bel-Marduk with the chaos-monster Tiamat, the sea-dragon, the power of darkness whose defeat is the beginning of the world of light and order. The same monster appears in various Biblical passages as [Rahab](#), the sea-monster; Tannin, the dragon of the sea; and Leviathan, the "crooked serpent" slain by Yhwh "with his sure and great and strong sword" (Isa. xxvii. 1, li. 9; Ps. lxxxix. 10, 11; Job xxvi. 12; Gunkel, "Schöpfung und Chaos," 1895, pp. 30-46 *et seq.*). While this mythological figure became in the course of time a metaphor symbolizing nations like Egypt (Ezek. xxix. 3; Ps. lxxxvii. 4), the monster remained a real being in the popular belief; and inasmuch as this conflicted with the monotheistic system, the battle of God or His angel Gabriel with Leviathan and Behemoth was transformed into a great eschatological drama which ended in the perfect triumph of divine justice (B. B. 75b). The Babylonian Tiamat, as Behemoth and Leviathan, became on the one hand infernal monsters devouring the wicked, and on the other food and cover for the righteous in heaven ([see Leviathan](#)). Nevertheless, the Mandæan and Gnostic heresies maintained the belief in these cosmic monsters (Brandt, "Mandäische Schriften," 1893, pp. 144 *et seq.*), and many descriptions of Gehenna in Jewish and Christian literature preserve traces of these. "Tartarus-holding" or "watching" demons of the lower regions (see Dieterich, *l.c.* pp. 35, 76 *et seq.*; [Eschatology](#); [Gehenna](#)). In fact, the hosts of demons punishing the wicked in Gehenna are in the service of angels of divine justice, and though called "saṭanim" (Enoch xl. 7 *et al.*), belong to the category of angels rather than of demons. According to the Book of Jubilees, Noah learned from the angels (Raphael) the remedies against these diseases, and wrote them in a "Book of Healing", similar to the one ascribed to King Solomon (x. 5-12; Jellinek, "B. H." iii. 155 *et seq.*, xxx. *et seq.*). The host of demons under Satan's direction accordingly seduce all heathen people to idolatry (Jubilees, vii. 27, x. 1, xi. 5, xv. 20, xxii. 17), but the end of Satan will be the healing and resurrection of the servants of the Lord (xxiii. 30).

The speculation regarding the nature and origin of these demons and their leaders led as early as the second pre-Christian century, in those fragments preserved under the name of the Book of Enoch, to the story of the fall of the angels (Enoch, vii.-viii.; lxix.). Like Beelzebub, or Lucifer (Isa. xiv. 12; compare Slavonic Enoch, xxix. 4), two hundred 'Irin or "watchers" fell, attracted by the beauty of the daughters of men (Gen. vi. 4); only tradition obviously differed as to the leader of the rebellious host, whether it was Azazel or Shamḥazai. At any rate, they acknowledged the supremacy of Satan (liii. 3, liv. 6), though occasionally many satans are mentioned (xl. 7 *et al.*), and these fallen angels became "the evil spirits" (xv. 8, xix. 19) who taught mankind all the arts of deception, witchcraft, and sin (vii.-viii., lxix.). But their children, the offspring of this mixture of an earthly and a celestial race, became, when slain, the hybrid race of disembodied spirits or demons doing the work of destruction until the Day of Judgment (xvi. 1). Belial is another name for Satan found in the Book of Jubilees (xv. 33), in Sibyllines (iii. 63), and in Ascension of Isaiah (ii. 4), where he is also called "the prince of injustice" (Sar ha-Maṣtemah), who rules over this world. Belial (or Beliar) occurs most frequently in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. He has "seven spirits of deception" in his service (Reuben, 2), and as author of all evil, "the

spirit of hatred, darkness, deception, and error," he is the opponent of God, the "Father of Light," and of His Law (Simeon, 5; Levi, 19; Issachar, 6; Dan, 5; Zebulun, 9; Naphtali, 8; Gad, 4; Joseph, 20), and when "he and his evil spirits are crushed the heathen world will be converted to the belief in the Lord" (Simeon, 7; Zebulun, 9). Under this aspect the world appeared as the arena in which Satan contends with the Lord, the God of life everlasting, until "the great dragon, the old serpent, he that is called Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world, shall be cast down and his angels with him" (Suk. 52a; Assumptio Mosis, xi.; Matt. xxv. 41; Rev. xii. 9).

New Testament Demonology.

The whole Jewish and pagan world at the beginning of the Christian era believed in those magic formulas by which the evil powers of the demons could be subdued, and the Jewish exorcists found a fertile soil everywhere for the cultivation of their Essene notions and their magic. This was the atmosphere in which Christianity arose with the claim of "healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts x. 38), enforcing the recognition by the unclean spirits themselves of the Son of David as the vanquisher of the demons (Mark i. 27, iii. 11). The name of Jesus became the power by which the host of Satan was to be overcome, as Jesus himself had seen "Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Mark ix. 38, xvi. 17; Matt. xii. 28; Luke x. 18). But there was danger lest the exorcism practised by Gentiles and Jews alike (see Conybeare, "J. Q. R." ix. 88 *et seq.*) should engender the spirit of impurity underlying all magic, the dividing line between legitimate and illegitimate magic being anything but sharply drawn (see Book of Jubilees, viii. 2; Sanh. 91a: "Abraham handed the name of unclean witchcraft to the sons of Keturah"; compare Blau, "Das Jüdische Zaubermwesen," pp. 15, 23, 41 *et seq.*). It was, therefore, not hostility which prompted the Pharisees to accuse Jesus and his disciples of "casting out devils by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils" (Matt. xii. 24; compare Ben Stada, Shab. 104b). The more devils cast out, the more appeared (Luke xi. 26). The cure offered to an age in constant dread of demons (Acts v. 16, viii. 7, xvi. 16, xix. 12-20) only aggravated the disease; nor did Paul's system (see Everling, "Die Paulinische Angelologie und Dämonologie," 1888) spiritualize the idea of Satan as the Testaments of the Patriarchs endeavored to do, in order to remove the fear of demons (see Eph. vi. 12; Gal. iv. 3, 9).

The Law, the Prophylactic Against Demons.

Pharisaism diagnosed the disease of the age differently, and therefore insisted that the observance of the Law was the best prophylactic against demons. The wearing of the Tefillin, the Greek name of which, φυλακτήρια, indicates that they were regarded by the Hellenistic Jews as amulets (comp. Targ. Cant. viii. 3; Gen. R. xxxv.; Men. 33b), the fixing of the [Mezuzah](#) at the door, the reading of the [Shema](#) 'with the name of God in the first verse, and the putting on of the [zizit](#), while direct observances of the Law (Deut. vi. 4-9, Num. xvi. 38), were also regarded by the Rabbis as a safeguard against all evil powers (Ber. 5a; Num. 48b). The recital of the set prayers each morning and evening (Ber. 9b), the observance of the commandment of the Sukkah (Pesik. 187b), protect against evil powers. In fact, "the wicked are accompanied by the angels of Satan; the righteous by the angels of God" (Tosef., Shab. xvii. 2-3; compare Book of Jubilees, x. 6). For each commandment observed by man becomes an angel "to guard him against demons" (Ex. R. xxxii. and Tan. *ad loc.*). "Every observance of the Law is a protection" (Soṭah 21a), and those bent upon doing some sacred work ("sheluḥe miṣwah") need fear no evil powers (Pes. 8b). The priest's blessing also is a protection against malign influences (Num. R. xi.). And as in the Passover night, "the night of watching," Satan was bound and prevented from doing harm to Israel (Book of Jubilees, xlviii. 15; Pes. 109b), so is "the left hand when adorned with the tefillim surrounded with thousands, and the right hand performing acts of religion surrounded with myriads, of guardian angels" (Midr. Teh. to Ps. xci. 4). "Every limb engaged in the fulfilment of a divine commandment is protected against the 'Strong One'" (Pesik. R. ix.; Midr. Teh. to Ps. xxxv.). Thus Pharisaism, while increasing the yoke of ceremonial laws for the sake of love of God, showed a way to overcome the fear of demons. Belief in the power of the Law became the antidote against what may be termed "Satanophobia," and against the spirit of pessimism and asceticism which was fostered by the Essenes and by their Christian heirs.

The Philosophers.

Though the belief in demons was greatly encouraged and enlarged in Babylonia under the influence of Parsee notions, demonology never became an essential feature of Jewish theology. The reality of demons was never questioned by the Talmudists and casuists; therefore the Halakah accepted it as a fact (see Shulḥan 'Aruḥ, Oraḥ

Ḥayyim, 4, 2 *et seq.*; 90, 6; 181, 2; Yoreh De'ah, 116, 5; 179, 16, 19; Eben ha-'Ezer, 17, 10: based upon Shab. 101a, 109a; Hul. 105a; Ber. 3a; Pes. 112a; Meg. 3a; Pes. 109b; Yeb. 122a). Nor did most of the medieval thinkers question their reality (see Nahmanides on Lev. xvii. 7; "Cuzari," v. 14; Crescas, "Or Adonai," iv. 6; Solomon b. Adret, Responsa, i. 413; Moses Tachau, in "Ketab Tamim"; "Ozar Neḥmad," iii. 97). Only Maimonides, when ignoring or circumscribing the rabbinical references to the demons (see "Yad," Rozeah, xii. 5; Gerushin, ii. 13 *et seq.*; compare "Moreh", i. 7, the commentary to Mishnah Pes. iv. 11, and Abot v. 6), and Ibn Ezra, on Lev. xvii. 7, denied their existence.

The Cabalists.

The cabalists, on the other hand, not only took up all the ideas expressed in Enoch and Pirke R. El. xxxiv., regarding the demons as the spirits of the men of the Flood and as the result of the union of Adam and Lilith, but they made demons form part of the cosmic design in the emanistic system in which the right and the left are the opposite currents of pure and impure powers filling the world and dividing it between the Holy One and the serpent Samael (see Zohar, Bereshit, 47b, 53 *et seq.*, 169b *et seq.*, 174b, and [Cabala](#)). But while the malign powers became agencies of the spirit of impurity working in men and nations, there goes along with this view the popular conception of demons as spirits of the dead roaming about as specters and vampires. This latter view is especially prominent in the school of R. Judah of Regensburg, and is dwelt upon in the Book of Raziel and the "Sefer Ḥasidim," 172, 326 *et seq.* Nevertheless, while the number of the demons of diseases increases (see Güdemann, "Gesch. des Erziehungswesens," 1880, i. 205; Yalk., Ḥadash, Mita, 149), and the belief in the efficacy of incantations is firmly adhered to, these writers repeatedly urge their readers not to resort to any conjuration or magic practises, but to have perfect confidence only in prayer and in the power of God. "No one who indulges in such practise will see good results for himself and his house" ("Sefer Ḥasidim," ed. Wistinetzki, Nos. 211 *et seq.*, 1448-57; Güdemann, *l.c.* 207).

Prayers Against Demons.

Notwithstanding this closing admonition of the "Sefer Ḥasidim," many prayers for the warding off of demonic influences have found a place in the Jewish liturgy and the Shulḥan 'Aruk. The privies having been in Talmudic times isolated spots which filled the imagination with specters of fear, a special incantation is prescribed invoking the protection of guardian angels against the evil spirits haunting these places (see Ber. 60b; compare Ber. 62a and Oraḥ Ḥayyim, 13, 1). Most of the prayers to be recited before retiring to bed are intended to guard the sleeper against demons (compare Ber. 4a; Shebu. 15b). At the close of the Sabbath, when the angel Dumah calls all spirits of the wicked back to their place of torment after their Sabbath respite, the evil spirits are supposed to swarm everywhere, poisoning the wells and doing harm in many ways; wherefore Psalm xci. is recited (see Pesik. R. xxiii.; Sheeltot, Bereshit; Tanya, xxi.; Ha-Manhig, Shabbat, 65; Solomon b. Adret, Responsa, 1119; Kol Bo, xli.). [See Dumah](#).

As early as geonic times there was a special incantatory formula, to be recited before drinking from the cup of the [Habdalah](#) wine, against "the demon Puta, the prince of forgetfulness," that "by the power of the holy names of the angels Arimaz, Arimas [Ahuramazda?], Anisel, and Petahel, he may be cast upon the high mountains [Alburz]" ("Seder Rab Amram," i. 31). To this Isaac Luria added new features in the form of incantations against all the demons, and instead of "Putah" he read "Purah," connecting it with Isa. lxiii. 1 as the name of Esau-Samael (see Isaac Luria, "Tikkune Shabbat," and Kizzur Shelah, "Moze'e Shabbat"; compare M. Brück, "Pharisäische Volkssitten," 1840, p. 121; Brüll, *l.c.*).

Death at all times impressed people with the fear of evil spirits. Many rites and prayer-formulas were introduced to avert their malign influence, and special formulas for the dying were prescribed by the cabalists, by which all the demons—the shedim, ruḥin, lilin, mazziḳim, etc.—that may have been created by the impure thoughts and deeds of the departing, are adjured, by the Holy Decrees, the Powers of Heaven, and the anathemas of men, not to follow the dead nor injure him, nor in any way, direct or indirect, to cause injury to any person through him (see "Ma'abar Yabbok," ed. Landshut, pp. 30-33, Berlin, 1857, and introduction, where the literature is given; [Amulet](#); [Childbirth](#); [Incantations](#)). Customs are sometimes explained by the superstitious as being based upon belief in demons; for instance, the one prohibiting women from going to a cemetery because demons are fond of

following her who yielded to the temptation of the serpent and thus caused death to come into the world, or the custom of blowing the shofar at funerals to ward off the shedim (see Yalk., Ḥadash, *l.c.* 47).

Bibliography:

- Herzog-Hauck, Real-Encyc. s.v. Feldgeister und Dämonische;
- L. Löw, in Ben Chananja, 1858, i. 150-154;
- Hamburger, R. B. T. s.v. Geister;
- Winer, B. R. s.v. Gespenster;
- M. Kalisch, Commentary on Leviticus, 1872, ii. 310-319;
- Weber, System der Altsynagogalen Theologie, Index;
- Schorr, in He-Ḥaluz, 1865, vii. 17 et seq.; 1869, viii. 8 et seq.;
- Fuller, in Wace's Apocrypha, 1888, i. 176, 183 et seq.;
- Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus, ii. 752-760, 771;
- Kohut, Angelologie und Dämonologie in Ihrer Abhängigkeit vom Parsismus, 1896.

E. G. H. G. K.—In Arabic Literature: This article treats only of parallels to Jewish demonology found in Arabic literature.

Ante-Islamic mythology does not discriminate between gods and demons. The jinn are considered as divinities of inferior rank, having many human attributes: they eat, drink, and procreate their kind (compare Ḥag. 16a, where a similar belief is expressed), sometimes in conjunction with human beings; in which latter case the offspring shares the natures of both parents. The jinn smell and lick things, and have a liking for remnants of food. In eating they use the left hand ("Maṇāḳib Al-Ansar," No. 32). Usually they haunt waste and deserted places, especially the thickets where wild beasts gather. Cemeteries and dirty places are also favorite abodes (compare Shab. 67a; Ber. 62b; Mark v. 5). In appearing to man they assume sometimes the forms of beasts and sometimes those of men; but they always have some animal characteristic, such as a paw in place of a hand (Darimi, "Kitab al-Sunnah," ii. 213). Eccentric movements of the dust-whirlwind ("zawabi") are taken to be the visible signs of a battle between two clans of jinn (Yaqut, iii. 478).

Under the influence of Jewish and Christian demonology in post-Islamic times, the only animals directly identified with the jinn are snakes and other obnoxious creeping things (compare Pes. 112a). When Mohammed was on his way to Tabuk, it is said that a swarm of jinn, assuming the form of serpents, approached him and stood still for a long while.

Generally jinn are peaceable and well disposed toward men. Many an ante-Islamic poet was believed to have been inspired by good jinn; and Mohammed himself was accused by his adversaries of having been inspired by jinn ("majnun"). But there are also evil jinn, who contrive to injure men. Among these are specially conspicuous the three female demons named "Ghul" (corresponding to the Talmudical לילית), "Si'lat," and "Aluḳ" or "Aulaḳ" (compare Prov. xxx. 15), and the four male demons "Afrit," "Azbab," "Aziab," and "Ezb." Ghul is especially harmful to new-born children, and in order to keep her away their heads are rubbed with the gum of an acacia (Zamakhshari, "Asas," s.v. "ḥaid").

Demons in Islam.

Islam recognized the existence of all the pagan demons, good and evil, protesting only against their being considered gods. It divides the evil demons into five species: "jann," "jinn," "shaiṭans," "afrits," and "marids." Mohammed frequently refers in the Koran to the shaiṭans, of whom Iblis is the chief. Iblis, probably a corruption of the name "Diabolos" = Satan, is said to have been deprived of authority over the animal and spirit kingdoms, and sentenced to death, when he refused, at the creation of Adam, to prostrate himself before him (Koran, vii. 13). The shaiṭans are the children of Iblis, and are to die when their father dies; whereas the others, though they may live many centuries, must die before him. A popular belief says that Iblis and other evil demons are to survive mankind, though they will die before the general resurrection; the last to die being 'Azaril, the angel of death.

Tradition attributes to Mohammed the statement that every man has an angel and a demon appointed to attend him. The former guides him toward goodness, while the latter leads him to evil ("Mishkat," i. ch. 3). The shaitans, being the enemies of Allah, strive to disturb worshipers. Mohammed, it is said, prefaced his prayers with "O God! In Thee I am seeking for a refuge from the attacks of the shaitan and his witchcraft" (Ḥamzah, vii. 293). Among the evil jinn are distinguished the five sons of Iblis: "Ṭir," who brings about calamities and injuries; "Al-A'war," who encourages debauchery; "Suṭ," who suggests lies; "Dasim," who causes hatred between man and wife; and "Zalambur," who presides over places of traffic. It was in order to keep them away that the faithful were commanded the cleansings and fumigations which are unbearable to the shaitans, who delight in dirt and filth (Wakīdi, ii. 178). The pronouncing of the "takbir" formula ("Allah akbar" =Allah is very great) is also a means of driving them away. Mohammed, it is said, pronounced it in his travels whenever the appearance of the region changed, lest it might be enchanted. In later times amulets were invented to which were ascribed the virtue of protecting their bearers from the attacks of demons.

As in cabalistic literature, the cat plays a great part in Islamic demonology. A demon assuming the form of a cat is said to have presented himself to Mohammed while he was praying (Darimi, *l.c.* ii. 449). The demons called "Ḳuṭrus" usually assumed the form of cats (Mas'udi, "Muruj al-Dhahab," iii. 321). As to the good jinn, there are some among them who profess Islamism, and Mohammed pretended that many of them had listened to his sermons (Koran, sura lxxii.).

Interesting are the accounts given in the Koran of the power of Solomon over the shaitans, which accounts parallel the legends found in Talmud and Midrashim, and of which the following are examples:

"And we [subjected] to Solomon sundry devils to dive for him, and do other works; and we watched over them" (sura xxi. 81, 82). "And we tried Solomon, and we placed upon his throne a counterfeit body. . . . So we subjected unto him the wind, which moved gently at his command whithersoever he desired; and the devils also—every builder and diver bound in chains" (sura xxxviii. 33-37). "And of the jinn were those who worked in his presence by the will of the Lord; and such of them as swerved from our command we caused to taste of the punishment of hell. They made for him whatever he pleased of lofty halls and images, and dishes large as tanks for watering camels" (sura xxxiv. 11-12).

In the tradition it is said that Solomon possessed power over the demons by virtue of a talisman, which consisted of a signet-ring of brass, upon which was engraved the most great name of God.

Bibliography:

- Wellhausen, Reste Arabischen Heidenthums, pp. 148 et seq.;
- Goldziher, Abhandlungen zur Arabischen Philologie, i. 3, 107, 198, 205;
- Freytag, Einleitung in die Arabische Sprache, p. 167;
- E. W. Lane, Arabian Society in the Middle Ages, pp. 25 et seq.;
- W. R. Smith, Semitic Religions, pp. 122 et seq.

G. I. Br.

12 Comments

Sort by **Oldest**



Add a comment...



James Robert Taylor · Davis Applied Technology College

:_-)

Like · Reply · 5y



Kenny Reitman · Fairleigh Dickinson University Alumni, Students and Friends

As always man still plays the game. The only thing is they never win, why is that simple when the get off their high horses the will uptain understanding witch infact Will indure them to a point they must uptain sin, rightness and judgement i infact have been judged and so shall the hypocites, where they are there will b tje gashing of the teeth.

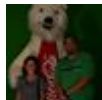
Like · Reply · 1 · 5y



Gina Galvan · Processing Seafood at Beach bum

I say there dont let them
Demons win...fight fight fight

Like · Reply · 5y



Martin Sanglas · Camelback High School

"Never Lose Faith In The LORD, For He Will NEVER FORESAKE US...As Promised." From his Only SON JESUS CHRIST, Our Savior, Who Never Quit or Tagged Out...He Fought to Save Us from Our Original Sin and Over Paid Our Dept. To Make Sure No Man, Woman, or Child....Is Left Behind." And ONLY Through Jesus, are we "ALLOWED" to come for and able to see Our Heavenly Father. We must learn from our mistakes, and stop judging or talking bad about other's. If GOD has created a NEW PLACE for all of us to Share and live Eternally Together, How can we show him that we are Worthy Enough to Live Up There amoung ... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 4 · 5y



Renee Molineux

Sunday was the day that the Pagans worshipped true but I don't know that all those that worshipped on that day worshipped Mithras. It was something Constantine decided to separate the Christians from the Jews. They believe they have a new covenant. That's the excuse but some are Seventh Day and not just the Adventists. They evolved from contact with the Seventh Day Baptists. Instead of going off on religious tirades folks, just read the material because no one wants to hear memorized quotes from the Bible especially if they don't believe in them.

Like · Reply · 1 · 1y



Yoel Ellen · MMA Fighter (Mixed Martial Arts Fighter) at Autónomo

Very interesting, indeed. Hashem ekhad.

Like · Reply · 2 · 5y



Richard King · Garden Grove (California)

jews have broken every covenant they ever made.remember the golden calf.what did god think about that if i remember right when moises got back from the mountian.kind of think he opened up the earth and swallowed them up and they wouldnt last a week without christians protectig them just like we did when we delivered them from the natzis there would be no jews without christians saving there asses and that is in gods plan

Like · Reply · 14w

[Load 7 more comments](#)

Images of pages



[V:4 P:514](#)



[V:4 P:515](#)



[V:4 P:516](#)



[V:4 P:517](#)



[V:4 P:518](#)



[V:4 P:519](#)



[V:4 P:520](#)



[V:4 P:521](#)

About Jewish Encyclopedia

- [Blog](#)
- [Literary Directorate Listing](#)
- [Preface](#)
- [Synopsis of Jewish Encyclopedia](#)
- [Systems of Transliteration Citation of Proper Names](#)
- [Abbreviations Listings](#)
- [List of Patrons](#)

Conceived, created, and funded by
The Kopelman Foundation

©2002-2011, *JewishEncyclopedia.com*. All rights reserved

[Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Contact](#)